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ABSTRACT

Noting that one of the biggest challenges in the United States today is the increasing number of infants and toddlers younger than age 3 who are cared for by someone other than their parents during work hours, this issue of NCEDL Spotlights announces the publication of a book examining out-of-home care for infants and toddlers. The book is an outgrowth of a national synthesis conference sponsored by the National Center for Early Development and Learning. It is noted that the book articulates the importance of appropriate caregiving during the first years of life, describes current practices and research findings, identifies key issues, and proposes new directions for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers. Chapter topics include cognitive development in infancy, language development in early childhood, quality in infant/toddlers programs, respiratory disease in infants/toddlers, diarrheal disease in infants/toddlers, early intervention and out-of- home care, cultural context of infant/toddler care, public policy, and the work-family relationship. The Spotlights issue concludes with a discussion of the need for societal supports for infant/toddler child care programs and a delineation of key discussion points from the book. (KB)

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NCEDL Spotlights

No. 30 January 2001

New book examines out-of-home care

This Spotlight is based on Infants and Toddlers in Out-of-Home Care, a new 376-page book that is an outgrowth of a national synthesis conference sponsored by NCEDL. Edited by Thelma Harms and Debby Cryer of the Frank Porter Graham Center at UNC-CH, the book is a compilation of the information presented and the discussions that occurred at the conference. The publisher is Brookes Publishing Co., Baltimore

Research, recommendations are offered for out-of-home care

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One of the biggest challenges in the lives of children in the United States today is the increasing number of infants and toddlers younger than 3 who are cared for by someone other than their parents during work hours.

"It is in our national interest to ensure than every infant has access to high-quality, nurturing, developmentally supportive care, whether that care is provided by a parent or by some other caregiver," writes Don Bailey, director of the Frank Porter Graham Center at UNC-CH, in the forward of a new book, Infants and Toddlers in Out-of-Home Care. This is the second book in a series by NCEDL. Bailey is former director of NCEDL, also based at UNC-CH.

"Yet, with the exception of state regulations for child care and the establishment of early intervention systems for high-risk children, as a nation, we are reluctant to intervene too much in the lives of children, families, or the individuals who make a living caring for young children," Bailey writes.
(Continued on reverse.)

Here are the topics of each chapter:

1 Introduction -- Thelma Harms

SECTION I Current Knowledge on Early Development

2 *Cognitive Development in Infants: Looking, Listening, and Learning* by Judy S. DeLoache

3 *Language Development in Early Childhood: The Role of Social Interaction* by Jane R. Katz and Catherine E. Snow

4 *Social Development, Family, and Attachment Relationships of Infants and Toddlers: Research into Practice* by Carollee Howes

SECTION II: Child Care and Intervention Programs

5 *New Directions for Studying Quality in Programs for Infants and Toddlers* by John M. Love, Helen Raikes, Diane Paulsell, and Ellen Eliason Kisker

6 *Respiratory Disease in Infants and Toddlers* by Albert M. Collier and Frederick W. Henderson

7 *Diarrheal Disease in Infants and Toddlers* by Robin B. Churchill and Larry K. Pickering

8 *The Early Intervention System and Out-of-Home Child Care* by Michael J. Guralnick

SECTION III: Ecological Perspectives on Infant and Toddler Care

9 *The Cultural Context of Infant and Toddler Care* by Judith K. Bernhard and Janet Gonzalez-Menahap

10 *Supporting Infants and Toddlers: The Nascent Policy Agenda* by Sharon Lynn Kagan and Kathryn Taaffe McLearn

11 *Supporting Families as Primary Caregivers: The Role of the Workplace* by Ellen Galinsky and James T. Bond

12 *The Whole Child: Transdisciplinary Implications for Infant and Toddler Care* by Debby Cryer

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(Continued from front.)

This new book articulates the importance of appropriate caregiving during the first years of life, describes current practices and research findings, identifies key issues, and proposes new directions for researchers, practitioners and policy makers.

Societal supports

The primary contexts in which the child is embedded, both family and child care, require societal supports to ensure children's success.

Raising infants and toddlers to be developmentally successful requires families and child care programs that are strong in many ways so that children can be given the attention and opportunities needed to optimize chances for success.

Yet, under the present conditions, supports to encourage these strengths are too often lacking. Supports available to those who are raising American's infants and toddlers are inadequate and unreliable.

If society requires that all children be given the best chance for success, then change is needed. If parents want more, for more children, and for the United States as a whole, then more will be required of society to meet this final basic need.

- **OERI** National Educational Research Centers

Key discussion point

- Positive development requires that the health of infants and toddlers be optimized, not only after they are born, but through prenatal care for their mothers as well.
- Policymakers need to tighten health-related infant/toddler regulation, basing rules on the latest research. However, because the child care system in the US is generally underfunded, policy would have to be supplemented with the means to pay for the upgraded regulation.
- Policies need to be created that extend parental leave and provide adequate financial support and employer-friendliness, so that parents can actually take advantage of any leave offered.
- Infants and toddlers require caring adults who are responsive and sensitive to the child's initiations. Families, care providers and policymakers must support the need for attentive care if optimal development can be expected for children in out-of-home care.
- Infants and toddlers require environments that are interesting and responsive to children's initiations.
- Infants and toddlers benefit when the interrelationship between family and out-of-home care is positive and constructive.
- It is imperative to recognize the need for child care teachers to be respected as educators and rewarded accordingly, in wages, benefits and working conditions.
- Child care program administrators must support teachers in creating the environment that children require for developmental progress.
- The education required for teachers of infants and toddlers needs to reflect the developmental requirements of the children, which differ, to some extent, from the needs of older children.
- Teacher education can also be used to minimize the negative effects of cultural clashes that might occur between a child's home and the child care environment.
- Parents and teachers need to share information to encourage understanding of the children and enthusiasm for what the child can do.

NCEDL is administratively housed at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In addition to UNC-CH, partners in NCEDL are the University of Virginia and the University of California at Los Angeles. This project is supported under the Education Research and Development Centers Program, PR/award number R307A60004, as administered by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education. Opinions do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education <ed.gov/offices/OERI/ECI/>, the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, the U.S. Department of Education, or any other sponsoring organization. Permission is granted to reprint this *Spotlight*; we ask that you acknowledge the authors of the brochure and NCEDL.

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